



United Way
of Central West Virginia

June 5, 2007

Ms. Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20554

One United Way Square
Charleston, WV 25304
304.340.3500 Tel
304.340.3508 Fax
www.uwaycentralwv.org

Dear Ms. Dortch,

I am writing in support of West Virginia 211. As a partner with WV 211 our Information and Referral (I&R) program in Charleston, WV has received numerous calls via the 211 number. In 2006 nearly 200 of our I&R calls were transferred to us from the 211 call center. The needs of those callers were for information about various programs and included referrals to programs that provide services for alcohol and addiction information, child safety seats and baby clothing, child care, Christmas assistance information, consumer advocacy and complaints, counseling, dental, disaster services, eyeglasses, financial aid, food, furniture, home repairs, homeless information, housing, information only (usually about a local agency), LIEAP information, legal assistance, medical needs (includes prescriptions, transportation, equipment and supplies), budget counseling, rental assistance, utility assistance, school supplies and transportation.

Assistance with utility bills remains the biggest percentage of the calls with rental assistance and information only calls being the next biggest need. With the ease of calling 211 people were able to be connected to their local I&R and receive the information that they needed. Otherwise, they may not have found a number for the local I&R and a fair portion of these needs may have gone unmet. An illustration of how this system works can be seen in the following story.

A woman called 211 in need of dentures. She is diabetic and also has asthma. She has been losing weight due to her inability to eat properly. The caller was patched through to the local I&R in Charleston to see if anyone would be able to help her get dentures. She was referred to the Donated Dental Program through the Bureau for Public Health. This is a little known program provided by network of dentists throughout WV who donate their time and services to indigent seniors and SSI recipients. The caller met the criteria for services through this program.

The caller called I&R again the next month to thank the I&R Specialist for providing her the information about this dental program and helping her get dentures. She had obtained a new set of dentures through the Donated Dental Program and she was thrilled. The caller said that the dentures look and feel so good in her mouth that it is impossible to tell that she is wearing them. The caller intends to pursue the program for her father who also needs dentures.

Sincerely,

Nancy Mayle, Director
United Way Information and Referral
1701 5th Ave., Box 2
Charleston, WV 25312

Vision: A diverse, safe, healthy, nurturing community.